



Cemetery Information & Regulations

HATFIELD ROAD CEMETERY ST ALBANS

LONDON ROAD CEMETERY ST ALBANS

WESTFIELD ROAD CEMETERY HARPENDEN

The cemeteries are administered under the Local Government Act 1972 Section 214 and Schedule 26, the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 & the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order (amendment) 1986.

Updated November 2009

The cemeteries are administered by the Culture and Community Development Department of St Albans City & District Council. The Council contracts out the grave digging and ground maintenance in our cemeteries to John O'Conner (Grounds Maintenance) Limited. All enquires should be addressed to:

The Cemeteries Manager

St Albans City & District Council

The Cemetery Office

Hatfield Road Cemetery

Hatfield Road

St Albans

Herts. AL1 4LU

Telephone/Fax:

01727 819362

E mail: cemeteries@stalbans.gov.uk

Introduction

It is the aim of the Council to provide the highest standards within its cemeteries service for the bereaved and others who visit our cemeteries.

It is essential therefore that cemetery regulations are in place to ensure that dignity and respect can be maintained and standards adhered to. The Council has adopted the Charter for the Bereaved and is committed to giving you the rights that are provided by the Charter (inspection copy at Cemetery Office).

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| 1. Hours of Opening: | November to February | 8 am to 4 pm |
| | March to October | 8 am to 7 pm |

The Cemetery grounds opening times apply to every day of the week/year. Any variation to these times will be displayed on the notice boards at the entrance to each cemetery. The Council cannot be held responsible for visitors who do not leave the cemeteries before the gates are locked.

The **Cemetery Office** is situated inside Hatfield Road Cemetery and is open from 9.00 am to 4.00 pm Monday to Friday except bank holidays. It is always advisable to make an appointment if you wish to visit the office because cemetery staff may not be available during burials or on other occasions.

2. Times of Interments (burials):

Interments may take place **between** the hours of 9.30 am to 3.30 pm Monday to Thursday and 9.30 am to 2.00 pm on Fridays.

Saturday morning interments are dependent on staff availability and subject to extra charges. No interments will take place on Bank Holidays.

The time booked for the interment is the time the cortege is due to arrive at the cemetery. You will need to keep to this time to avoid disruption to other funerals. If the cortege arrives early or late, the funeral must wait until it is convenient to proceed.

3. Notice of Interment (burial):

Any person wishing to arrange an interment must liaise with the Cemeteries Manager who will allocate a day and time. It is not always possible to have the day and time you wish due to other burials and practical considerations. At least two clear working days notice must be given. Telephone bookings are accepted but a written Notice of Interment must be received either by hand, fax or post to confirm the booking, together with the appropriate fee as set out in the Council's current fees and charges. The Notice of Interment form is obtainable from the Cemetery Office. The original Notice of Interment must be received by Cemetery staff prior to the burial.

4. Allocation of Grave Spaces:

Practical considerations mean that all new grave spaces will be dug in rotation with no selection. If a burial is required in the Roman Catholic section at Westfield Road Cemetery or the Muslim section at London Road Cemetery this must be stated at the time of booking. Reclaimed grave spaces at Hatfield Road Cemetery are subject to availability; a choice of section may be possible but cannot be guaranteed.

5. Fees:

All fees must be paid before the burial or fixing of a memorial. Receipts will be issued for any money paid to the Council. Non-residents of St Albans District will be charged double fees for all services except transfer of ownership and search fees. Resident fees will be applied if the deceased had to move into a care or nursing home, arranged by Social Services, outside the District.

6. Certificate for Burial:

A Registrar's Certificate or Coroner's Order for burial must be delivered to the Cemetery Office before a burial can proceed. The burial cannot proceed if the Certificate has been forgotten except where the funeral director has signed a declaration in accordance with the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1926. A Certificate of Cremation must be delivered to the Cemetery Office before a burial or scattering of cremated remains can proceed. A member of the Cemetery staff must be in attendance at all burials.

7. Reopening Graves:

A grave cannot be reopened without the prior written consent of the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial; unless the person to be buried is the owner of the Exclusive right of Burial. The Council have the right to see the Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial before a grave is reopened. Please refer to Paragraph 20 on Transfers of Exclusive Right of Burial for more information about change of ownership.

The Funeral Director arranging the burial must also arrange to have any memorials removed in time for the grave to be reopened. The Cemeteries do not have the space or facilities to store any memorials hence they must be removed from the cemetery (including kerbstone landings) prior to reopening.

8. **Types of Graves:**

General graves can be provided in all cemeteries. These graves have no burial or memorial rights and non-family members may be buried in the same grave. It is important to consider the implications of a burial in a general grave.

Purchased (Exclusive Right of Burial) graves are available at all three cemeteries. A Grave Deed will be issued following the first burial in the name of the applicant stated on the Notice of Interment. Further burials may take place in the grave on the authorisation of the holder of the Exclusive Right of Burial. A memorial may be placed on the grave subject to the completion of a Memorial Works application form and payment of the appropriate cemetery fee. The Exclusive Right of Burial does not include the ownership of the actual land which remains with the Council.

Traditional section graves may have a kerb memorial not exceeding 6'6" x 3' outlining the grave space on payment of the appropriate fee to the Cemetery Office. If the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial wishes to outline the grave space with wooden, cement or stone edging a memorial works application form must be completed and the appropriate fee paid to the Cemetery Office. Should the fee not be paid the Council reserve the right to remove the edging. Graves will be grass seeded if no kerb memorial is installed or plants present.

Lawn section graves may have a headstone/cross/book type memorial not exceeding 3' high x 2'6" wide. An area measuring 3' wide x 1' deep may be planted directly in front of the headstone. The remainder of the grave will be grass seeded. No kerbs, fences or barriers will be permitted around the planted area but a timber edge (3' x 1') may be installed flush with ground level. No chippings are allowed in the lawn sections.

Reclaimed graves are used graves with further space where the burial rights have not been purchased and have no memorial; however, burials have taken place in these graves at least 60 years ago. The existing burial is not disturbed when the grave is reopened. Reclaimed graves may be single or double depth and an Exclusive Right of Burial will be issued to the purchaser.

Green burial graves at Hatfield Road Cemetery are single depth only but an adjacent grave may be reserved at the time of the first burial, on payment of the relevant fee. Graves may be marked with a wooden memorial, either an upright 18" log provided by the cemetery or one carved or placed by the family. Headstones or outlining of the grave is not permitted. Eco friendly and biodegradable coffins such as cardboard, willow or bamboo would be most appropriate but no chipboard or metal. Cut flowers only may be placed on the grave, without a container. The green section is sown with grass & wildflowers and only cut back two or three times each year to encourage wildlife.

9. **Cemeteries:**

Hatfield Road Cemetery, AL1 4LU, has limited numbers of reclaimed graves in traditional sections. A small, green burial area is now available where ecologically friendly coffins may be interred in single depth graves.

London Road Cemetery, AL1 1LX, has sections of graves specifically for children and Muslims. The original cemetery only has lawn type graves. The new extension to London Road Cemetery will have a choice of traditional or lawn grave sections and dedicated sections for children and Muslims.

Westfield Road Cemetery, AL5 4HR, has traditional sections of graves and sections specifically for children and Roman Catholics.

10. **Reserving a Grave:**

Graves at London Road and Westfield Road cemeteries may be reserved in advance for 20 years on payment of the full purchase fee. If the grave is not used within this 20 year period a further fee will be required to extend the reservation. It is essential to advise the Cemetery Office of any change of address to ensure that you receive details of the extension fee at the appropriate time. Graves cannot be reserved at Hatfield Road Cemetery.

11. **Chapel:**

A small chapel is available for hire at Hatfield Road Cemetery for funeral services. The maximum number of seats is 40. A CD player is available.

12. **Burial Registers:**

Registers for all cemeteries are held at Hatfield Road Cemetery office and are available for inspection on application to the Cemeteries Manager.

13. **Digging and specification of graves:**

All graves are to be dug by the Council's contractor. Graves may be at double depth (6'), suitable for two interments, or single depth (4'6"). Funeral Directors are required to provide in writing to the Cemetery Office the **exact** coffin/casket size at least 48 hours prior to the interment. Failure to do so may result in the grave not being ready at the time required.

14. **Opening graves:**

When graves are opened for an interment the soil from the grave will need to be placed on adjacent graves. Every care will be taken to reinstate the turf and clean any memorials which have been soiled during the opening.

15. Removal of memorial for the reopening of graves:

Memorials on graves to be reopened must be removed from the grave (and the cemetery) at least 24 hours before the interment at the expense of the applicant for the interment. Memorials cannot be stored in the cemeteries.

16. Coffins/caskets:

Coffins can be made of wood, cardboard, willow, wicker or other recyclable material. Requests to use coffins made of other materials, for example, metal will be considered. All coffins must bear an inscribed metal name plate. A minimum of 6" of earth is to remain between all coffins and no coffin is to be buried less than 3 feet from the surface. Coffin sizes must be provided to the Cemetery Office in writing. The Council will not be responsible for incorrectly dug graves if the coffin size has not been provided in writing at least 48 hours prior to the burial. The Council retains the right to levy an extra charge for large coffins/caskets.

17. Uncoffined/shroud only burials:

Burials without coffins are permitted provided that the deceased is brought to the grave in a temporary coffin and screening is used to afford decency during the burial. Uncoffined/shroud only burials are not permitted if the deceased had a contagious or notifiable disease.

18. Cremated remains:

Gardens of rest are available at all cemeteries for the burial of cremated remains. Plots are usually 24" x 24" and have space for up to four containers of cremated remains. Cremated remains may also be interred without a container. Hatfield Road Cemetery Garden of Rest also provides vase blocks, personal gardens and a sanctum niche for cremated remains. Cremated remains may also be interred in graves, usually at a depth of 18"; however, consideration must be given to whether the grave will be used for further full burials. Cremated remains must not be disturbed when a grave or plot is reopened. It is not permitted to scatter or inter cremated remains without prior permission of the Cemeteries Manager and the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial, completion of a Notice of Interment and payment of the appropriate fee.

19. Exclusive Right of Burial:

The burial rights to a grave are usually purchased at the time of the first interment. A Grant (or Grave Deed) will be issued to the person(s) who is the applicant for the interment. A maximum of two people may hold the burial rights and both must agree to, and sign for, any further interments or memorial work. The person who holds the burial rights to a grave may be referred to as the grave owner but this does not mean that they own the land, which remains with the Council. The length of the Exclusive Right of Burial is 100 years (the length of time is under review) although different periods apply in the Hatfield

Road Garden of Rest. Exclusive Rights of Burial are not available for general graves.

20. Transfers of Exclusive Right of Burial:

It is advisable to transfer the ownership of the Exclusive Right of Burial to another family member after the death of the owner. This will prevent delays should the grave need to be reopened in the future. The person who applies for the interment of the deceased owner will normally receive a transfer of ownership form from the Cemetery Office inviting them to transfer ownership. Relinquishment statements may need to be completed if there are a number of next of kin with equal rights to have the burial rights transferred to them. If ownership has not been transferred no further interments (or new memorials) can take place in the grave or garden of rest plot. Transfers may also be carried out whilst the owner is alive. An administration fee is payable to the Council for the transfer.

21. Memorials:

- a. Memorials may be placed on graves once settlement has taken place and we advise that 12 months is allowed for this process. New graves on section B at London Road have a foundation plinth already installed and a memorial may be placed on the grave immediately after a burial.
- b. All memorial work including new memorials, renovation work and additional inscriptions are subject to the approval of the Council. A memorial works application form must be completed and the relevant fee paid to the Cemetery Office before any memorial work is ordered. The Council will not issue a memorial permit unless the owner of the Exclusive Right of Burial has authorised the memorial work.
- c. All memorials must have the grave or plot number clearly inscribed. If a memorial is placed in a cemetery without a number the mason will be required to return and inscribe the number in situ. Permits must be returned to the Cemetery Office to confirm that the memorial has been fixed. On the return of the permit Cemetery staff will check that the memorial has been fixed correctly.
- d. To ensure memorial safety all memorials must be fixed by Memorial Masons who are members of the Council's Registration Scheme and according to the National Association of Memorial Masons guidelines.
- e. Memorials must be maintained in good condition by their owners. The Council has the power to remove unsafe memorials or make them safe.
- f. The Council strongly encourages the insuring of all memorials in its cemeteries. A leaflet is available from the Cemetery Office. The Council cannot be held responsible for any damage, vandalism or theft.
- g. The Council has the legal power to remove unauthorised memorials and those that are not maintained adequately or are unsafe.

22. **Masons:**

The Council has a Registration Scheme for memorial masons and only masons who have completed the registration process may work in our cemeteries. Masons must remove any old memorial on the grave, all spoil from the cemetery and clean the ground around the memorial. Masons will be held responsible for any damage caused to the ground or to any memorials. No mason is permitted to solicit orders within the cemetery.

23. **Memorial types:**

Memorials on graves in **traditional** sections of the cemeteries may outline the grave space (no larger than 6'6" x 3'). **Lawn** section graves may only have a headstone/book or cross at the head of the grave (no larger than 3' high and 2'6" wide). Please do not order or place a memorial in the cemetery until you are sure what is permitted. Always ask the Cemetery Office if you are unsure what type of grave you own or memorial is allowed. Memorials for **cremated remains plots** are a 12" square plaque/tablet and/or a 5" x 5" x 5" vase to be placed on top of the plaque. The plaque is to be placed flush with the grass and no other memorials or vases are permitted. The Garden of Rest at Hatfield Road Cemetery has a number of other types of plot for which other regulations regarding memorials apply.

24. **Managing Memorials:**

A rolling programme of memorial safety testing operates in all our cemeteries and closed churchyards. Any memorial which is assessed as unsafe will be supported by a rope and stake whilst the owner of the memorial is contacted. Memorials are the responsibility of the owners of the Exclusive Right of Burial, (not the cemetery) and it is highly recommended that they are kept adequately insured against damage, vandalism and theft.

25. **Temporary wooden markers**

Temporary wooden grave markers are to be removed from the cemetery as soon as a permanent memorial is installed. If you wish cemetery staff to dispose of the marker please place it near a bin.

26. **Maintenance of new graves**

Wreaths and floral tributes will be removed from new graves once they have become unsightly. If you wish to retain any such items please inform the Cemetery Office as soon as possible. New graves will be 'topped up' with soil as required by the Council's Contractor during the settlement period, which can take 12 months. Once settlement has been completed a layer of topsoil and grass seed will be applied to the grave. Pots and plants placed on the grave may prevent this work being completed.

27. Plants or other items placed on graves

No plants may be placed on graves if they are likely to grow over 3 foot tall. Plants must not be allowed to spread beyond the grave space. The Council reserve the right to trim, prune, cut down or dig up any plants that have become unsightly, overgrown or a nuisance to other users of the cemetery. Christmas wreaths will be removed after 31st January each year. Nothing other than flowers, wreaths or a memorial should be placed on graves.

28. Glass or pottery

Please do not place any glass or pottery items on graves or garden of rest plots. They can cause injury should they break. Any glass items found on graves or plots will be removed and placed in a storage area for collection by the grave owner. Glass chippings are also not permitted on any graves because they may be thrown up by grass cutting equipment and cause injury.

29. Vehicles

A speed limit of 5 mph is in force in the cemeteries. Any vehicle driver seen to be driving too fast or recklessly will be cautioned by Cemetery staff. Many of the paths in our cemeteries are too narrow for vehicles and care must be taken not to drive over grass areas or close to memorials. Only vehicles on Cemetery business are permitted to park in the cemeteries. All vehicles, whether in attendance at a funeral or not, are subject to the control and direction of the Cemeteries Manager during such times as they remain in the cemetery or the cemetery approach. The Council shall not accept any responsibility for any damage to, or loss from, any vehicle. Vehicles must be removed from the cemetery before closing time.

30. Dogs

Dogs are not permitted in the cemeteries at any time except assist dogs. It can be very upsetting for visitors to see dogs running over graves and/or fouling in the cemeteries.

31. Children

We welcome children in our cemeteries but they must be supervised at all times. Please do not let children play near or climb on memorials. Children under 12 years old are not allowed in the cemeteries unless under the care of an adult.

32. Conduct of visitors

Visitors shall keep to the surfaced roads and paths, except when approaching the grave they are visiting. Visitors should behave with dignity and respect whilst visiting the cemeteries. Litter must be placed in the bins provided.

The Local Government Cemeteries Order 1977, Paragraph 18 states:

1. No person shall -
 - (a) wilfully create any disturbance in a cemetery;
 - (b) commit any nuisance in a cemetery;
 - (c) wilfully interfere with any burial taking place in a cemetery;
 - (d) wilfully interfere with any grave or vault, any tombstone or other memorial, or any flowers or plants on any such matter; or
 - (e) play at any game or sport in a cemetery.

2. No person not being an officer or servant of the burial authority or another person so authorised by or on behalf of the burial authority shall enter or remain in a cemetery at any hour when it is closed to the public.

33. Memorial benches

The Council welcomes the donation of memorial benches. Benches that are donated become the property of the Council and the donor does not have any right to place anything other than the memorial plaque on or near the bench. Neither do they have a right to prevent other cemetery visitors using the bench. Memorial benches may only be supplied by the Council; no other benches may be brought into the Cemeteries. The price of a donated bench can be obtained through the Cemetery Office. The location of the bench will need to be agreed with the Cemeteries Manager and cannot necessarily be placed near a particular grave. If the donor wishes to maintain the bench they must notify the Cemetery Office before any work is carried out. Notices must be placed on the bench to prevent visitors sitting on wet vanish etc.

34. Alteration of Regulations and Fees & Charges

St Albans City & District Council reserves the right to make alterations to the Cemetery Regulations, facilities offered and also to Fees and Charges.